

HON. RON PAUL OF TEXAS BEFORE THE US HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES September 8, 2005

Why We Fight

Many reasons have been given for why we fight and our youth must die in Iraq. The reasons now given for why we must continue this war bear no resemblance to the reasons given to gain the support of the American people and the United States Congress prior to our invasion in March of 2003. Before the war, we were told we faced an imminent threat to our national security from Saddam Hussein. This rationale, now proven grossly mistaken, has been changed. Now we're told we must honor the fallen by "completing the mission." To do otherwise would demean the sacrifice of those who have died or been wounded. Any lack of support for "completing the mission" is said, by the promoters of the war, to be unpatriotic, un-American, and detrimental to the troops. They insist the only way one can support the troops is to never waver on the policy of nation building, no matter how ill-founded that policy may be. The obvious flaw in this argument is that the mission, of which they so reverently speak, has changed constantly from the very beginning.

Though most people think this war started in March of 2003, the seeds were sown many years before. The actual military conflict, involving U.S. troops against Iraq, began in January 1991. The prelude to this actually dates back over a hundred years, when the value of Middle East oil was recognized by the industrialized West.

Our use of troops to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait was the beginning of the current conflict with Muslim fundamentalists who have been, for the last decade, determined to force the removal of American troops from all Muslim countries-- especially the entire Arabian Peninsula, which they consider holy. Though the strategic and historic reasons for our involvement in the Middle East are complex, the immediate reasons given in 2002 and 2003 for our invasion of Iraq were precise. The only problem is they were not based on facts.

The desire by American policymakers to engineer regime change in Iraq had been smoldering since the first Persian Gulf conflict in 1991. This reflected a dramatic shift in our policy, since in the 1980s we maintained a friendly alliance with Saddam Hussein as we assisted him in his war against our arch nemesis, the Iranian Ayatollah. Most Americans ignore that we provided

assistance to this ruthless dictator with biological and chemical weapons technology. We heard no complaints in the 1980s about his treatment of the Kurds and Shiites, or the ruthless war he waged against Iran. Our policy toward Iraq played a major role in convincing Saddam Hussein he had free reign in the Middle East, and the results demonstrate the serious shortcomings of our foreign policy of interventionism that we have followed now for over a hundred years.

In 1998 Congress capitulated to the desires of the Clinton administration and overwhelmingly passed the Iraq Liberation Act, which stated quite clearly that our policy was to get rid of Saddam Hussein. This act made it official: "The policy of the United States to support efforts to remove the regime headed by Saddam Hussein." This resolution has been cited on numerous occasions by neo-conservatives as justification for the pre-emptive, deliberate invasion of Iraq. When the resolution was debated, I saw it as a significant step toward a war that would bear no good fruit. No legitimate national security concerns were cited for this dramatic and serious shift in policy.

Shortly after the new administration took office in January 2001, this goal of eliminating Saddam Hussein quickly morphed into a policy of remaking the entire Middle East, starting with regime change in Iraq. This aggressive interventionist policy surprised some people, since the victorious 2000 campaign indicated we should pursue a foreign policy of humility, no nation building, reduced deployment of our forces overseas, and a rejection of the notion that we serve as world policemen. The 9/11 disaster proved a catalyst to push for invading Iraq and restructuring the entire Middle East. Though the plan had existed for years, it quickly was recognized that the fear engendered by the 9/11 attacks could be used to mobilize the American people and Congress to support this war. Nevertheless, supposedly legitimate reasons had to be given for the already planned pre-emptive war, and as we now know the "intelligence had to be fixed to the policy."

Immediately after 9/11 the American people were led to believe that Saddam Hussein somehow was responsible for the attacks. The fact that Saddam Hussein and Osama bin Laden were enemies, not friends, was kept from the public by a compliant media and a lazy Congress. Even today many Americans still are convinced of an alliance between the two. The truth is Saddam Hussein never permitted al Qaeda into Iraq out of fear that his secular government would be challenged. And yet today we find that al Qaeda is now very much present in Iraq, and causing chaos there. The administration repeatedly pumped out alarming propaganda that Saddam Hussein was a threat to us with his weapons of mass destruction, meaning nuclear, biological, and chemical. Since we helped Saddam Hussein obtain biological and chemical weapons in the 1980s, we assumed that he had maintained a large supply-- which of course turned out not to be true. The people, frightened by 9/11, easily accepted these fear-mongering charges.

Behind the scenes many were quite aware that Israel's influence on our foreign policy played a role. She had argued for years, along with the neo-conservatives, for an Iraqi regime change. This support was nicely coordinated with the Christian Zionists' enthusiasm for the war.

As these reasons for the war lost credibility and support, other reasons were found for why we had to fight. As the lone superpower, we were told we had a greater responsibility to settle the problems of the world lest someone else gets involved. Maintaining and expanding our empire is a key element of the neo-conservative philosophy. This notion that we must fight to spread American goodness was well received by these neo-Jacobins. They saw the war as a legitimate moral crusade, arguing that no one should be allowed to stand in our way! In their minds using force to spread democracy is legitimate and necessary.

We also were told the war was necessary for national security purposes because of the threat Saddam Hussein presented, although the evidence was fabricated. Saddam Hussein's ability to attack us was non-existent, but the American people were ripe for alarming predictions by those who wanted this war.

Of course the routine canard for our need to fight, finance, and meddle around the world ever since the Korean War was repeated incessantly: UN Resolutions had to be enforced lest the United Nations be discredited. The odd thing was that on this occasion the United Nations itself did everything possible to stop our pre-emptive attack. And as it turned out, Saddam Hussein was a lot closer to compliance than anyone dreamed. It wasn't long before concern for the threat of Saddam Hussein became near hysterical, drowning out any reasoned opposition to the planned war.

The one argument that was not publicly used by those who propagandized for the war may well be the most important-- oil. Though the administration in 1990 hinted briefly that we had to eject Saddam Hussein from Kuwait because of oil, the stated reasons for that conflict soon transformed into stopping a potential Hitler and enforcing UN resolutions.

Publicly oil is not talked about very much, but behind the scenes many acknowledge this is the real reason we fight. This is not only the politicians who say this. American consumers have always enjoyed cheap gasoline and want it kept that way. The real irony is that the war has reduced Iraqi oil production by one-half million barrels per day and prices are soaring-- demonstrating another unintended economic consequence of war.

Oil in the Middle East has been a big issue since the industrial revolution, when it was realized that the black substance bubbling out of the ground in places like Iraq had great value. It's interesting to note that in the early 20th century Germany, fully aware of oil's importance, allied itself with the Turkish Ottoman Empire and secured the earliest rights to drill Iraqi oil. They built the Anatolia railroad between Baghdad and Basra, and obtained oil and mineral rights on twenty kilometers on each side of this right-of-way. World War I changed all this, allowing the French and the British to divide the oil wealth of the entire Middle East.

The Versailles Treaty created the artificial nation of Iraq, and it wasn't long before American oil companies were drilling and struggling to participate in the control of Middle East oil. But it was never smooth sailing for any occupying force in Iraq. After WWI, the British generals upon arriving to secure "their" oil said: "Our armies do not come into your cities and lands as conquerors or enemies, but as liberators." Not long afterward a jihad was declared against Britain and eventually they were forced to leave. The more things change, the more they stay the same! Too bad we are not better at studying history.

After World War II the U.S. emerged as the #1 world power, and moved to assume what some believed was our responsibility to control Middle East oil in competition with the Soviets. This role prompted us to use our CIA, along with the help of the British, to oust democratically elected Mohammed Mosadeh from power in Iran and install the Shah as a U.S. puppet.

We not only supported Saddam Hussein against Iran, we also supported Osama bin Laden in the 1980s-- aggravating the situation in the Middle East and causing unintended consequences. With CIA assistance we helped develop the educational program to radicalize Islamic youth in many Arab nations, especially in Saudi Arabia to fight the Soviets. We even provided a nuclear reactor to Iran in 1967-- which today leads us to threaten another war. All of this has come back to haunt us. Meddling in the affairs of others has consequences.

Finally, after years of plotting and maneuvering, the neo-conservative plan to invade Iraq came before the U.S. House in October 2002 to be rubber-stamped. Though the plan was hatched years before, and the official policy of the United States government was to remove Saddam Hussein ever since 1998, various events delayed the vote until this time. By October the vote was deemed urgent, so as to embarrass anyone who opposed it. This would make them politically vulnerable in the November election. The ploy worked. The resolution passed easily, and it served the interests of proponents of war in the November election. The resolution, HJ RES 114, explicitly cited the Iraqi Liberation Act of 1998 as one of the reasons we had to go to war. The authorization granted the President to use force against Iraq cited two precise reasons:

1. “To defend the national security of the U.S. against the continuing threat posed by Iraq and”
2. “Enforce all relevant United Nations Council resolutions regarding Iraq.”

Many other reasons were given to stir the emotions of the American public and the U.S. Congress, reasons that were grossly misleading and found not to be true. The pretense of a legal justification was a sham.

The fact that Congress is not permitted under the Constitution to transfer the war power to a president was ignored. Only Congress can declare war, if we were inclined to follow the rule of law. To add insult to injury, HJ RES 114 cited United Nations resolutions as justifications for the war. Ignoring the Constitution while using the UN to justify the war showed callous disregard for the restraints carefully written in the Constitution. The authors deliberately wanted to make war difficult to enter without legislative debate, and they purposely kept the responsibility out of the hands of the executive branch. Surely they never dreamed an international government would have influence over our foreign policy or tell us when we should enter into armed conflict.

The legal maneuvering to permit this war was tragic to watch, but the notion that Saddam Hussein-- a third world punk without an air force, navy, and hardly an army or any anti-aircraft weaponry-- was an outright threat to the United States six thousand miles away, tells you how hysterical fear can be used to pursue a policy of needless war for quite different reasons.

Today, though, all the old reasons for going to war have been discredited, and are no longer used to justify continuing the war. Now we are told we must “complete the mission,” and yet no one seems to know exactly what the mission is or when it can be achieved. By contrast, when war is properly declared against a country we can expect an all-out effort until the country surrenders. Without a declaration of war as the Constitution requires, it’s left to the President to decide when to start the war and when the war is over. We had sad experiences with this process in Korea and especially in Vietnam.

Pursuing this war merely to save face, or to claim it’s a way to honor those who already have died or been wounded, is hardly a reason that more people should die. We’re told that we can’t leave until we have a democratic Iraq. But what if Iraq votes to have a Shiite theocracy, which it

looks like the majority wants as their form of government-- and women, Christians, and Sunnis are made second-class citizens? It's a preposterous notion and it points out the severe shortcomings of a democracy where a majority rules and minorities suffer.

Thankfully, our founding fathers understood the great dangers of a democracy. They insisted on a constitutional republic with a weak central government and an executive branch beholden to the legislative branch in foreign affairs. The sooner we realize we can't afford this war the better. We've gotten ourselves into a civil war within the Islamic community.

But could it be, as it had been for over a hundred years prior to our invasion, that oil really is the driving issue behind a foreign presence in the Middle East? It's rather ironic that the consequence of our intervention has been skyrocketing oil prices, with Iraqi oil production still significantly below pre-war levels.

If democracy is not all it's cracked up to be, and a war for oil is blatantly immoral and unproductive, the question still remains-- why do we fight? More precisely, why should we fight? When is enough killing enough? Why does man so casually accept war, which brings so much suffering to so many, when so little is achieved? Why do those who suffer and die so willingly accept the excuses for the wars that need not be fought? Why do so many defer to those who are enthused about war, and who claim it's a solution to a problem, without asking them why they themselves do not fight? It's always other men and other men's children who must sacrifice life and limb for the reasons that make no sense, reasons that are said to be our patriotic duty to fight and die for. How many useless wars have been fought for lies that deserved no hearing? When will it all end?

Why We Should Not Fight

Since no logical answers can be given for why we fight, it might be better to talk about why we should not fight. A case can be made that if this war does not end soon it will spread and engulf the entire region. We've already been warned that war against Iran is an option that remains on the table for reasons no more reliable than those given for the pre-emptive strike against Iraq. Let me give you a few reasons why this war in Iraq should not be fought.

It is not in our national interest. On the contrary, pursuing this war endangers our security,

increases the chances of a domestic terrorist attack, weakens our defenses, and motivates our enemies to join together in opposition to our domineering presence around the world. Does anyone believe that Russia, China, and Iran will give us free reign over the entire Middle East and its oil? Tragically, we're setting the stage for a much bigger conflict. It's possible that this war could evolve into something much worse than Vietnam.

This war has never been declared. It's not a constitutional war, and without a proper beginning there can be no proper ending. The vagueness instills doubts in all Americans, both supporters and non-supporters, as to what will be accomplished. Supporters of the war want total victory, which is not achievable with a vague mission. Now the majority of Americans are demanding an end to this dragged-out war that many fear will spread before it's over.

It's virtually impossible to beat a determined guerrilla resistance to a foreign occupying force. After 30 years the Vietnam guerillas, following unbelievable suffering, succeeded in forcing all foreign troops from their homeland. History shows that Iraqi Muslims have always been determined to resist any foreign power on their soil. We ignored that history and learned nothing from Vietnam. How many lives, theirs and ours, are worth losing to prove the tenacity of guerilla fighters supported by a large number of local citizens?

Those who argue that it's legitimate to protect "our oil" someday must realize that it's not our oil, no matter how strong and sophisticated our military is. We know the war so far has played havoc with oil prices, and the market continues to discount problems in the region for years to come. No end is in sight regarding the uncertainty of Middle East oil production caused by this conflict.

So far our policies inadvertently have encouraged the development of an Islamic state, with Iranian-allied Shiites in charge. This has led to Iranian support for the insurgents, and has placed Iran in a position of becoming the true victor in this war as its alliance with Iraq grows. This could place Iran and its allies in the enviable position of becoming the oil powerhouse in the region, if not the world, once it has control over the oil fields near Basra.

This unintended alliance with Iran, plus the benefit to Osama bin Laden's recruiting efforts, will in the end increase the danger to Israel by rallying the Arab and Muslim people against us.

One of the original stated justifications for the war has been accomplished. Since 1998 the stated policy of the United States government was to bring about regime change and get rid of Saddam Hussein. This has been done, but instead of peace and stability we have sown the seeds of chaos. Nevertheless, the goal of removing Saddam Hussein has been achieved and is a reason to stop the fighting.

There were no weapons of mass destruction, no biological or chemical or nuclear weapons, so we can be assured the Iraqis pose no threat to anyone, certainly not to the United States.

No evidence existed to show an alliance between Iraq and al Qaeda before the war, and ironically our presence there is now encouraging al Qaeda and Osama bin Laden to move in to fill the vacuum we created. The only relationship between Iraq and 9/11 is that our policy in the Middle East continues to increase the likelihood of another terrorist attack on our homeland.

We should not fight because it's simply not worth it. What are we going to get for nearly 2,000 soldier deaths and 20 thousand severe casualties? Was the \$350 billion worth it? This is a cost that will be passed on to future generations through an expanded national debt. I'll bet most Americans can think of a lot better ways to have spent this money. Today's program of guns and butter will be more damaging to our economy than a similar program was in the 1960s, which gave us the stagflation of the 1970s. The economic imbalances today are much greater than they were in those decades.

Eventually, we will come to realize that the Wilsonian idealism of using America's resources to promote democracy around the world through force is a seriously flawed policy. Wilson pretended to be spreading democracy worldwide, and yet women in the U.S. at that time were not allowed to vote. Democracy, where the majority dictates the rules, cannot protect minorities and individual rights. And in addition, using force to impose our will on others almost always backfires. There's no reason that our efforts in the 21st century to impose a western style government in Iraq will be any more successful than the British were after World War I. This especially can't work if democracy is only an excuse for our occupation and the real reasons are left unrecognized.

It boils down to the fact that we don't really have any sound reasons for continuing this fight. The original reasons for the war never existed, and the new reasons aren't credible. We hear only that we must carry on so those who have already suffered death and injury didn't do so in vain. If the original reasons for starting the war were false, simply continuing in the name of

those fallen makes no sense. More loss of life can never justify earlier loss of life if they died for false reasons. This being the case, it's time to reassess the policies that have gotten us into this mess.

What does all this mean?

The mess we face in the Middle East and Afghanistan, and the threat of terrorism within our own borders, are not a result of the policies of this administration alone. Problems have been building for many years, and have only gotten much worse with our most recent policy of forcibly imposing regime change in Iraq. We must recognize that the stalemate in Korea, the loss in Vietnam, and the quagmire in Iraq and Afghanistan all result from the same flawed foreign policy of interventionism that our government has pursued for over 100 years. It would be overly simplistic to say the current administration alone is responsible for the mess in Iraq.

By rejecting the advice of the Founders and our early presidents, our leaders have drifted away from the admonitions against entangling alliances and nation building. Policing the world is not our calling or our mandate. Besides, the Constitution doesn't permit it. Undeclared wars have not enhanced our national security.

The consensus on foreign interventionism has been pervasive. Both major parties have come to accept our role as the world's policeman, despite periodic campaign rhetoric stating otherwise. The media in particular, especially in the early stages, propagandize in favor of war. It's only when the costs become prohibitive and the war loses popular support that the media criticize the effort.

It isn't only our presidents that deserve the blame when they overstep their authority and lead the country into inappropriate wars. Congress deserves equally severe criticism for acquiescing to the demands of the executive to go needlessly to war. It has been known throughout history that kings, dictators, and the executive branch of governments are always overly eager to go to war. This is precisely why our founders tried desperately to keep decisions about going to war in the hands of the legislature. But this process has failed us for the last 65 years. Congress routinely has rubber stamped the plans of our presidents and even the United Nations to enter into war through the back door.

Congress at any time can prevent or stop all undue foreign entanglements pursued by the executive branch merely by refusing to finance them. The current Iraq war, now going on for 15 years, spans the administration of three presidents and many congresses controlled by both parties. This makes Congress every bit as responsible for the current quagmire as the president. But the real problem is the acceptance by our country as a whole of the principle of meddling in the internal affairs of other nations when unrelated to our national security. Intervention, no matter how well intended, inevitably boomerangs and comes back to haunt us. Minding our own business is not only economical; it's the only policy that serves our national security interests and the cause of peace.

The neo-conservatives who want to remake the entire Middle East are not interested in the pertinent history of this region. Creating an artificial Iraq after World War I as a unified country was like mixing water and oil. It has only led to frustration, anger, and hostilities-- with the resulting instability creating conditions ripe for dictatorships. The occupying forces will not permit any of the three regions of Iraq to govern themselves. This is strictly motivated by a desire to exert control over the oil. Self-determination and independence for each region, or even a true republican form of government with a minimalist central authority is never considered-- yet it is the only answer to the difficult political problems this area faces. The relative and accidental independence of the Kurds and the Shiites in the 1990s served those regions well, and no suicide terrorism existed during that decade.

The claim that our immediate withdrawal from Iraq would cause chaos is not proven. It didn't happen in Vietnam or even Somalia. Even today, the militias of the Kurds and the Shiites may well be able to maintain order in their regions much better than we can currently. Certainly the Sunnis can take care of themselves, and it might be in their best interests for all three groups not to fight each other when we leave. One thing for sure: if we left no more young Americans would have to die for an indefinable cause.

Instead, we have been forcing on the people of Iraq a type of democracy that, if implemented, will mean an Islamic state under Sharia' law. Already we read stories of barbers no longer being safe shaving beards; Christians are threatened and forced to leave the country; and burqas are returning out of fear. Unemployment is over 50%, and oil production is still significantly below pre-war levels. These results are not worth fighting and dying for.

In this war, like all others, the propagandists and promoters themselves don't fight, nor do their children. It's always worth the effort to wage war when others must suffer and die. Many of those who today pump the nation up with war fever were nowhere to be found when their numbers were called in the 1960s-- when previous presidents and Congresses thought so little

about sending young men off to war. Then it was in their best interests to find more important things to do-- despite the so-called equalizing draft.

The inability of taxpayers to fund both guns-and-butter has not deterred those who smell the glory of war. Notoriously, great nations fall once their appetite for foreign domination outstrips their citizens' ability or willingness to pay. We tried the guns-and-butter approach in the 1960s with bad results, and the same will happen again as a consequence of the current political decision not to cut back on any expenditure, domestic or foreign. Veto nothing is current policy! Tax, borrow, and print to pay the bills is today's conventional wisdom. The problem is that all the bills eventually must be paid. There's no free lunch, and no free war. The economic consequences of such a policy are well known and documented. Excessive spending leads to excessive deficits, higher taxes, and more borrowing and inflation-- which spells economic problems that always clobber the middle class and the poor.

Already the suffering has begun. A lackluster recovery, low paying jobs, outsourcing, and social unrest already are apparent. This economic price we pay, along with the human suffering, is an extravagant price for a war that was started with false information and now is prolonged for reasons unrelated to our national security.

This policy has led to excessive spending overseas and neglect at home. It invites enemies to attack us, and drains the resources needed to defend our homeland and care for our own people. We are obligated to learn something from the tragedy of Katrina about the misallocation of funds away from our infrastructure to the rebuilding of Iraq after first destroying it. If ever there was a time for us to reassess our policy of foreign interventionism, it is today. It's time to look inward and attend to the constitutional needs of our people, and forget about the grandiose schemes to remake the world in our image through the use of force. These efforts not only are doomed to fail, as they have for the past one hundred years, but they invite economic and strategic military problems that are harmful to our national security interests. We've been told that we must fight to protect our freedoms here at home. These reasons are given to make the sacrifices more tolerable and noble. Without an honorable cause, the suffering becomes intolerable. Hiding from the truth, though, in the end is no panacea for a war that promises no peace.

The most important misjudgment regarding Iraq that must be dealt with is the charge that Muslim terrorists attack us out of envy for our freedoms, our prosperity, and our way of life. There is no evidence this is the case. On the contrary, those who have extensively researched this issue conclude that the #1 reason suicide terrorists attack anywhere in the world is because their land is occupied by a foreign military power. Pretending otherwise and constantly

expanding our military presence in more Arab and Muslim countries as we have since 1990 has only increased the danger of more attacks on our soil, as well as in those countries that have allied themselves with us. If we deny this truth we do so at our own peril.

It's not unusual for the war crusaders to condemn those who speak the truth in an effort to end an unnecessary war. They claim those who want honest reasons for the enormous sacrifice are unpatriotic and un-American, but these charges only serve to exacerbate the social unrest. Any criticism of policy, no matter how flawed the policy is, is said to be motivated by a lack of support for the troops. Yet it is preposterous to suggest that a policy that would have spared the lives of 1900 servicemen and women lacks concern for the well being of our troops. The absence of good reasoning to pursue this war prompts the supporters of the war to demonize the skeptics and critics. They have no other defense.

Those who want to continue this war accuse those who lost loved ones in Iraq, and oppose the war, of using the dead for personal political gain. But what do the war proponents do when they claim the reason we must fight on is to honor the sacrifice of the military personnel we lost by completing the mission? The big difference is that one group argues for saving lives, while the other justifies more killing. And by that logic, the additional deaths will require even more killing to make sure they too have not died in vain. Therefore, the greater number who have died, the greater is the motivation to complete the mission. This defies logic. This argument to persevere has been used throughout history to continue wars that could and should have ended much sooner. This was true for World War I and Vietnam.

A sad realism struck me recently reading how our Marines in Afghanistan must now rely on donkey transportation in their efforts at nation building and military occupation. Evidently the Taliban is alive and well, as Osama bin Laden remains in this region. But doesn't this tell us something about our naïve assumption that our economic advantages and technical knowledge can subdue and control anybody? We're traversing Afghan mountains on donkeys, and losing lives daily in Baghdad with homemade primitive bombs. Our power and dominance clearly is limited by the determination of those who see us as occupiers, proving that just more money and sophisticated weapons won't bring us victory. Sophisticated weapons and the use of unlimited military power is no substitute for diplomacy designed to promote peace while reserving force only for defending our national interests.

Changing our policy of meddling in the affairs of others won't come quickly or easily. But a few signals to indicate a change in our attitude would go a long way to bringing peace to a troubled land.

1. We must soon, and Congress can do this through the budget process, stop the construction of all permanent bases in Iraq and any other Muslim country in the region. Think of how we would react if the Chinese had the military edge on us and laid claims to the Gulf of Mexico, building bases within the U.S. in order to promote their superior way of life. Isn't it ironic that we close down bases here at home while building new ones overseas? Domestic bases might well promote security, while bases in Muslim nations only elicit more hatred toward us.
2. The plans for the biggest U.S. embassy in the world, costing nearly 1 billion dollars, must be canceled. This structure in Baghdad sends a message, like the military bases being built, that we expect to be in Iraq and running Iraq for a long time to come.
3. All military forces, especially on the Arabian Peninsula, must be moved offshore at the earliest time possible. All responsibility for security and control of the oil must be transferred to the Iraqis from the United States as soon as possible, within months not years.

The time will come when our policies dealing with foreign affairs will change for the better. But that will be because we can no longer afford the extravagance of war. This will occur when the American people realize that war causes too much suffering here at home, and the benefits of peace again become attractive to us all. Part of this recognition will involve a big drop in the value of the dollar, higher interest rates, and rampant price inflation.

Though these problems are serious and threaten our freedoms and way of life, there's every reason to work for the traditional constitutional foreign policy that promotes peace over war, while not being tempted to mold the world in our image through force. We should not forget that what we did not achieve by military force in Vietnam, was essentially achieved with the peace that came from our military failure and withdrawal of our armed forces. Today, through trade and peace, U.S. investment and economic cooperation has westernized Vietnam far more than our military efforts.

We must remember initiating force to impose our will on others negates all the goodness for which we profess to stand. We cannot be fighting to secure our freedom if we impose laws like the Patriot Act and a national ID card on the American people.

Unfortunately, we have lost faith and confidence in the system of government with which we have been blessed. Today too many Americans support, at least in the early stages, the use of force to spread our message of hope and freedom. They too often are confused by the rhetoric that our armies are needed to spread American goodness. Using force injudiciously, instead of spreading the worthy message of American freedom through peaceful means, antagonizes our enemies, alienates our allies, and threatens personal liberties here at home while burdening our economy.

If confidence can be restored in our American traditions of peace and trade, our influence throughout the world would be enhanced just as it was once we rejected the military approach in Vietnam.

This change in policy can come easily once the people of this country decide that there is a better way to conduct ourselves throughout the world. Whenever the people turn against war as a tool to promote certain beliefs, the war ceases. That's what we need today. Then we can get down to the business of setting an example of how peace and freedom brings prosperity in an atmosphere that allows for excellence and virtue to thrive.

A powerful bureaucratic military state negates all efforts to preserve these conditions that have served America so well up until recent times. That is not what the American dream is all about. Without a change in attitude, the American dream dies: a simple change that restates the principles of liberty enshrined in our Constitution will serve us well in solving all the problems we face. The American people are up to the task; I hope Congress is as well.